

Remarks

The above-identified application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action mailed March 1, 2006.

Without conceding the correctness of any of the Examiner's rejections, applicant has amended certain of the present claims in order to facilitate obtaining an early allowance in the above-identified application. Applicant expressly reserves the right to seek patent protection for the original claims, the amended claims and any other claims supported by the above-identified application in one or more later filed, related applications.

Independent claims 1, 11, 23 and 31 have been amended to include the subject matter of claims 10, 22, 30 and 43, respectively, each of which has been cancelled, without prejudice. In addition, claims 44, 46, 48 and 50 have been cancelled, without prejudice. Claim 25 has been amended to be dependent on claim 23. New claims 52-73 have been added and are directed to embodiments for which patent protection is sought. Each of these amendments is fully supported by the present specification.

In view of the amendment to claim 25, and the cancellation of claims 44, 46, 48 and 50, noted above, applicant submits that the present claims satisfy the requirements of 35 USC 112, second paragraph. Therefore, applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection based on this statutory provision.

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Examiner's holding that claims 10, 22, 30 and 43 include allowable subject matter. Applicant also gratefully acknowledges that, in an Office Action mailed June 20, 2005, the Examiner indicated that the then

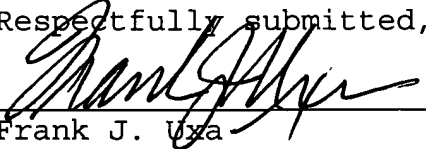
pending claims 10, 22, 30 and 43 included allowable subject matter.

As noted above, independent claims 1, 11, 23 and 31 have been amended to include the allowable subject matter of claims 10, 22, 30 and 43, respectfully. In addition, new claims 52-60 and 61-73 have been added and include the allowable subject matter of claims 10 and 22, respectively, acknowledged by the Examiner in the Office Action mailed June 20, 2005.

In view of the above, applicant submits that claims 1-9, 11-21, 23, 25-29, 31-35, 37-42, 45, 47, 49, 51 and 52-73 include allowable subject matter, as acknowledged by the Examiner. Therefore, applicant submits that each of these claims is allowable.

In conclusion, applicant has shown that the present claims satisfy the requirements of 35 USC 112, second paragraph, and include allowable subject matter over the prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 103. In view of this, applicant submits that all of the present claims, that is claims 1-9, 11-21, 23, 25-29, 31-35, 37-42, 45, 47, 49, 51 and 52-73, are allowable. Therefore, applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to pass the above-identified application to issuance at an early date. Should any matters remain unresolved, the Examiner is requested to call applicant's attorney at the telephone number given below.

Respectfully submitted,



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